

Documents on Diplomacy: Lessons

Putting "A Spin" on Foreign Affairs

Standard: II. Time, Continuity, and Change
V. Individuals, Groups, and Institutions
VI. Power, Authority, and Governance
X. Civic Ideals and Practices

Grade Level: 9-12 (*Note: high order thinking*)

Objectives: The student will:

- Read and dissect key ideas in primary documents
- Fill in a chart related to key themes in Federalist #4 and #64
- Examine and discuss the ideas necessary for strong diplomatic plans
- Transfer words of the 1770s into words of the 2010s

Time: 1-2 class periods

Materials: Documents: **1787** Federalist No. 4
1787 Federalist No. 64

Resources: *Briefing Memo: Diplomacy under the Articles of Confederacy*
Section II: Diplomatic Terms and Historical Events

Exercises: *Key Federalist Paper Themes*
Federalist Wisdom to "Spin"
Vocabulary Review List

Highlighters

Procedures:

Setting the Stage

In the years preceding the adoption of the U.S. Constitution, critics used essays as an instrument in the campaign for and against adopting the Constitution. One set of essays addressed the general problems of politics in the Confederation and these have been called the Federalist Papers. More than 85 essays appeared in key newspapers throughout the new nation, signed with pseudonyms. Former diplomats John Jay, Alexander Hamilton, Thomas Jefferson, and John Adams were aware of the unbroken record of diplomatic failure plaguing the new nation. They were advocates of change and urged the development of a system more protective from dangerous foreign influences—especially military ones. These key themes show up in Federalist No. 4. Meanwhile Federalist No. 64 addressed the critics who were opposed to including concurrent powers of a president and the Senate to make and approve treaties instead of allowing individual sovereign states to do their own treaties and negotiations.

Day One:

- 1.** Have students review the vocabulary list and formulate explanations of the terms in one of several ways:
 - a.** Create analogies with the terms to be posted in class.
 - b.** Group the terms in categories.
 - c.** Define and discuss examples with a partner.
- 2.** Distribute the Documents *Federalist No. 4* and *Federalist No. 64* and the Themes Chart
 - a.** Allow students to read quietly on their own, highlighting passages they find applicable, then pair them up to agree on passages in the documents that give answers to the Themes Chart.
 - b.** Teacher can circulate while they work in pairs helping to explain passages and possible terminology.
- 3.** Hold a class discussion about the chart, asking for ideas from the documents that address the themes in the chart
 - a.** During the discussion ask the students to read the sections of the document(s) that apply.
 - b.** Have two students summarize the discussion.
 - c.** Before exiting, have each individual write his/her own reflection of the readings, the chart and the discussion: whatever directions their reflections take.
 - d.** The teacher should review these reflections before the next day's lesson.

Day Two:

- 1.** Using the documents again, review for the students the key ideas they used in their reflections.
- 2.** Hand out the Exercise *Federalist Wisdom to Spin* and, with different partners, put a "spin" on the quotes rewriting them to fit the 21st century in terminology and actions.
- 3.** Have different partners share their "sound bites" related to the quotes.
- 4.** Discussion should occur again as they add examples of actions and thoughts about modern diplomacy, even if their thinking is not informed.
- 5. Final Step:** Taking the ideas heard and read in the last two days, each student will now write *The 21st Century Federalist* for modern times and non-observant citizens. (They may want to refer back to documents and chart.)

Extension Activities:

- 1.** Have a student committee select several *21st Century Federalist* essays and publish them in the school newspaper.
- 2.** Have students bring in a song with words appropriate for school that thematically fits the ideas of these documents.
- 3.** Have interested students research the Anti-Federalist Papers, which captured the arguments of those opposed to the Constitution. ■